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Mr. Sherman Kent
Assistant Director,
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The most obvious demand for the longer term estimates stems from the requirement to furnish the planners and the programmers with an intelligence basis for designing the future force structure. In the Air Force, and I am sure it is true with the other services, the planners more and more examine the statement of the "Threat" provided by Intelligence before developing the requirements for the types and quantity of weapons systems to be programmed. Our Force Estimates Board and Air Council demand that the "Threat" cover at least a ten-year period for this purpose. At the same time, our civilian bosses and senior air officers increasingly want to know if our estimates are compatible with the NIEs. They are fully aware of the fact that agreed national intelligence is a more convincing support to planning than is unilateral intelligence.

Another vital requirement for longer term estimates results from the Research and Development people's need to know the probable hostile environment in which a future weapons system will operate; so as to be able to design into the system effective performance characteristics to reduce its vulnerability. Since the development time for most weapons systems normally exceeds five years, it is apparent that the intelligence which affects the system should go beyond five years.

While I recognize the difficulties in providing such an estimate of the size and shape of the Soviet threat in 1969, we believe that such an estimate must be made and intelligence should make it.

USAF Declass/Release Instructions On File

Sincerely,

/s/

L. A. HALL
Colonel, USAF
Acting Director of Estimates
Office of National Intelligence